

THE SCRIPTURAL FAST:

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF
TWO DISCOURSES

PREACHED ON THE LATE

GENERAL FAST DAY,

FEBRUARY 28, 1794.

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"CRY ALOUD, SPARE NOT, LIFT UP THY VOICE LIKE A TRUMPET,
"AND SHEW MY PEOPLE THEIR TRANSGRESSIONS." *Judah, lviii. 1.*

L O N D O N:

Printed and Sold by HUGHES and WALSH, Inner Temple Lane, London; also sold by TRAPP, Paternoster-row; MATTHEWS, Strand; and at the Vestries of the two Chapels above mentioned.

M.DCC.XCIV.

[PRICE NINE PENCE.]

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE author of the following publication had not the least intention of committing it to the press, till some days after the substance of it was delivered from the pulpit. But it having been suggested to him that, at the present alarming crisis, it might, by the divine blessing, be useful to others, as well as to his own congregations; he endeavoured to recollect the substance of what he had preached extempore; and having written it out at full length, as nearly as he could in the same plain style, in which it was preached; he has now, at the request of select friends, caused it to be printed; submitting to the candor of the reader this hasty production; and humbly trusting it may, with the blessing of the Great Head of the Church, be of some service to the public.

ISLINGTON,
March 9, 1794.



THE SCRIPTURAL FAST, &c.

ISAIAH lviii. 5, 6.

Is it such a Fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day unto the Lord? Is not this the Fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness?

WE are met together this day, brethren, on a most solemn and important occasion; to observe a day of general fast and humiliation before God; in prayer for the pardon of our sins; for averting the heavy and long deserved judgments impending over our heads; for imploring divine assistance in our time of need; and for restoring and perpetuating a speedy and honourable peace to this kingdom, and all the dominions belong-

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ing thereunto. Nothing less is the special business of this day; but is it to be confined to this day? That were a solemn mockery indeed; a mere farce; an affront to the Majesty of heaven; a calling for indignation instead of mercy. “Is it *such* a fast, saith the “Lord, that I have chosen? For a man to “afflict his soul for *a day*? (as it might be translated, and as it is in the margin of our Bible). “Is not this the fast that I have “chosen, to *loose* the bands of wickedness?” Leave this undone, ye pervert the very nature of the fasts, that I have chosen. Seeing then this is the original design of such a divine institution, a scriptural fast; it becomes us, if we are really in earnest, and mean something more than form, and the external shew of the “bowing down the head as a bulrush, “and the spreading sackcloth and ashes under us,” to lay the axe to the root of the tree. National sins will bring down national judgments. “What peace can we expect “whilst our whoredoms and our witchcrafts “are so many?” as Jehu said unto Joram (a). “Righteousness indeed exalteth a nation; “but sin is a reproach to any people (b).”

(a) 2 Kings, ix. 22. (b) Prov. xiv. 34.

If

If a nation forsake God, he declares “ his
 “ anger shall be kindled against them, and he
 “ will forsake them, and hide his face from
 “ them, and they shall be devoured, and
 “ many evils and troubles shall befall them ;
 “ so that they will say in that day, are not
 “ these evils come upon us, because our God
 “ is not among us (c) ?” Wherefore, as it is
 evident God has at present a quarrel with us,
 it becomes us, on this solemn occasion, not
 only as a body of people, but as individuals,
 to “ commune with our own hearts and upon
 “ our beds (d),” that is, to meditate on our
 principles and practice, in our most secret
 retirement, “ and be still,” ceasing to mur-
 mur against God, his awful dispensations, and
 righteous judgments.

In discoursing on this subject,

- I. Let us consider our great mercies and privileges.
- II. Reflect on our many and heinous pro-
vocations.
- III. Point out the means of averting God’s
displeasure, and obtaining his mercy and
favour in time of danger.

(c) Deut. xxxi. 16, 17.

(d) Ps. iv. 4.

I. Let us consider our great national mercies and privileges. And here, not to insist upon the more antient deliverances of this kingdom from the galling yoke and tyranny of foreign powers, how has the Lord interposed in behalf of this land in the great reformation from popery ! the overthrow of the formidable, Spanish Armada ! and the grand Revolution of the last century ! Nor should we forget the suppression of the rebellions, in the years 1715 and 1745 ; or the sudden turn of affairs in 1759, from the brink of despair to the summit of national glory. And one recent instance of the goodness of God to this nation in particular must be fresh in every one's mind : the recovery of our present gracious Sovereign from his late dangerous and alarming malady, that baffled the art of his chief physicians, sunk the nation into despondency, and excited the most sanguine hopes of his secret and avowed enemies. But, blessed be the Lord, our extremity was his opportunity. He poured out a spirit of supplication on his people of all denominations ; he heard ; he answered ; and, at a time when we could hardly expect it, sent us help. Yea on the very

very day, when instruments were prepared to be signed for the appointment and establishment of a regency, a prospect and symptoms of recovery appeared, and were announced from authority; to the confusion of his enemies, and the universal joy of his faithful subjects. Delivered, therefore, as our nation hath been, in a signal, and little less than a miraculous, manner, (at different times); from the ignorance and idolatry of pagans; from the blind superstition of papists; and from the despotic oppression of arbitrary power; favoured with the blessed Gospel, instead of heathenism; yea, with the *purity* of it, in contradistinction from the errors of popery; secured also in the enjoyment of our dearest privileges, civil and religious, each man sitting under his own vine and his fig-tree; and with full toleration to every man to worship God in his own way, according to his light, and agreeably to his conscience; and enjoying many other innumerable and invaluable privileges as Englishmen, by the Bill of Rights; must we not say, “ What nation is like unto “ this, thy favoured people (e) ? ” Blessed be

(e) 2 Sam. vii. 23.

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God,

God, we are not now chanting Ave Marias ; counting our beads ; or falling down and worshipping carved images, the Virgin Mary, and the canonized saints. The Lord has graciously opened our eyes, and delivered us from this popish trumpery. No longer are our Bibles shut up from us, or read in an unknown tongue. No longer are the people to pin their faith on the sleeves of the conclave, or to be guided by the infallible decrees of the whore of Babylon. No longer are our princes to be slaves to the Pope of Rome, or tools to the priests ; nor themselves excommunicated, and their subjects absolved from their allegiance, by the bulls of his holiness. No longer are we to fear the burning of heretics, or the sealing our testimony to the truth with our blood at the stake. Instead of all this papal superstition, tyranny, and perversion of Scripture ; When we consider how clearly the doctrines of the Gospel, especially that bulwark of Protestantism, justification by faith alone, (which is pronounced by one of our great reformers, to be *articulus stantis five cadentis ecclesiæ* ; the article, or test, of a standing or falling church), are stated in the thirty-nine articles of the established

established church ; and indispensably required to be subscribed by every minister that enters into her communion ; we cannot but admire and adore the wisdom and goodness of God, in thus erecting and maintaining this public standard of the essential truths of the word of God. We acknowledge indeed and lament the insincerity of many, who subscribe, but do not maintain or preach them. These men forget, that if they are true, they are bound by the most sacred ties to preach them ; and if they are false, they ought not, as honest men, to subscribe to them. Glory be to God, however, that the profession of our most holy religion is not attended now with the loss of our liberty, our property, and our lives. No fines, no imprisonment, no martyrdom are inflicted now. Time was, when a cloud of witnesses have suffered tortures and death for righteousness sake ; or, if not brought to that extremity, turned out of their livelihood, torn from their families, cast into prisons ; and, what was worse than all, forbidden to preach the everlasting Gospel ; and when they ventured to speak a word in their Master's name, obliged to meet in holes and corners at midnight, and without light, for

fear of discovery ; and at last, when all hope was at an end, drove out of the kingdom, to a foreign Clime, to maintain their religion with a conscience void of offence. Glory be to God, that instead of groaning under a popish prince and arbitrary power, we have a monarch on the throne, who has permitted no persecution for the Gospel during his reign ; who makes the laws of the land his rule for action ; attends diligently and minutely to the *public* affairs ; and is a striking and exemplary pattern of morality and social virtues, in his *private* life ! Yet, strange to tell ! with such a constitution, such privileges, and such a prince, how many are dissatisfied ! But, what is as unaccountable, as it is deplorable ; who could have believed, that any *religious* persons, who enjoy the utmost toleration, and are standing proofs of the mildness of the present august Family on the throne, and the lenity of administration, should dare to throw out disaffected and bitter invectives against our king's royal person and government ; and poison the minds of their hearers with seditious discourses ; and of the public at large, with inflammatory speeches and pamphlets ! “ Tell it not in Gath, publish it

“ not

“ not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the
 “ daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest
 “ the daughters of the uncircumcised
 triumph (f). But, blessed be God, this is
 not the case, I trust, with the *greater* number
 of religious persons; whether in the Establish-
 ment, or out of it. I know many of the
 most respectable Dissenters, as well as
 Churchmen, have been long sensible of, and
 thankful to the Lord for the invaluable
 blessings they and their fathers have, near a
 century, enjoyed under the illustrious House
 of Hanover. And they have taken every
 proper occasion to testify their loyalty, and to
 support that government, which maintains
 and protects their privileges. They feel it a
 mercy, that they have not to complain of the
 despotic strides of an Henry VIII, the cruelty
 of a bloody Mary, the infamous lewdness and
 profligacy of a Charles II. nor the popish bi-
 gancy and superstition of his brother James.
 They discover no grounds of fear, lest the
 prerogative of the reigning prince should
 weigh down the privileges of the subject;
 both being alike secured and guarded against
 undue encroachment, by the Bill of Rights,

(f) 2 Sam. i. 20.

and

and the subsequent laws of our excellent constitution.

Yet, with all these peculiar liberties, is it not an undeniable fact, that many in this kingdom have been so poisoned by seditious writings, industriously diffused through this land, and sold at a very low price, to be put into the hands, and to inflame the minds, of the lowest of the people, at the expence of some of their superiors ? Who are, it is to be feared, men either of ambitious views, or disappointed in their prospects, or desperate in their fortunes ; but seem determined, if possible, to pull down the antient and glorious fabrick of our invaluable constitution, in order to aggrandize themselves, and to rise upon its ruins. Not that any one on the other hand can be so infatuated as to expect perfection of any kind in this imperfect state of things ; or to suppose that every individual in any administration is without spot ; or that every one in opposition to a premier must be therefore a wicked man. This would be prejudice indeed. But suppose your house, in length of time, wants repairs, or could admit of some alteration ; would you therefore destroy the building, and raze it to the foundation ?

foundation ? Or would you not take the most favourable season in the year for making this alteration ? Is the time of war the proper time for alteration of things at home ? which requires cool reflection, deliberate investigation, steady perseverance and unanimity among true patriots and real friends of the constitution, whether they are in or out of administration. These things I only hint at, to promote internal peace, and to check unreasonable and groundless dissensions among ourselves. And whilst speaking on this occasion, I cannot accuse myself of being out of the way of my duty, more than St .Paul was, when, by divine command, he enjoyned "sub-
 "mission to the higher powers," or "ex-
 "horted prayers and giving of thanks to be
 "made for kings and for all that are in
 "authority, that we may lead a quiet and
 "peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."
 If this kind of politics is improper *now*, to be taught by the ministers of the word, it was *then*. If unfit for the *pulpit*, how had it a place in the *Bible*? Are we not "wise
 "above what is written?" and do we not thereby condemn the Holy Ghost, and the writers he inspired by his own dictates to inculcate those doctrines, which come with equal

equal authority, as any other part of the oracles of God? But to proceed: These men, with their deluded adherents, “ despise do-“ minion, and speak evil of dignities (g).” and “ professing to be “ free, they use their liberty “ as a cloak of maliciousness,” and forget the “ apostle’s exhortation to “ fear God, and “ honour the king (h).” Insomuch that it requires no small Christian fortitude, for ministers of the Gospel, in the present day, to preach submission to the higher powers, as an ordinance of God (i); or to declare that it is by his divine authority that “ kings reign “ and princes decree justice (l). These would rather “ do, every man, as is right in “ his own eyes (m),” and have “ no King in “ Israel.” “ We are they that ought to “ speak,” is the language of their hearts, their lips, and their conduct; “ Who is “ Lord over us (n)?” I speak boldly, with the freedom of a minister of Christ, who has nothing to fear from opposition on the one hand; and nothing to hope for from administration on the other; but desirous to be

(g) Jude viii.

(l) Prov. viii. 15.

(h) 1 Pet. ii. 16, 17.

(m) Jud. xvii. 6.

(i) Rom. xiii. 1. Tit. iii. 1.

(n) Ps. xii. 4. 1 Cor. iv. 2.

faithful,

faithful, and “ commanding himself to every “ man’s conscience in the sight of God,” and how can we but lament, that when the Lord might justly expect “ grapes from us, as so highly favoured a nation, we should bring forth *wild* grapes !” This brings me to consider

II. Our many and heinous provocations. Truly we may cry out with Isaiah, “ Hear “ O heavens, and give ear O earth, for the “ Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and “ brought up children, and they have re- “ belled against me. The ox knoweth his “ owner, and the ass his master’s crib, but “ Israel doth not know, my people doth not “ consider. Ah ! sinful nation, a people “ laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, “ children that are corruptors ! They have “ forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the “ Holy One of Israel to anger, they are “ gone away backward (o).” To what other cause but this universal apostacy of nature, and departure from God, can we trace up the general depravity and corruption that pervades all orders of men amongst us, from high to low ! What blasphemy and contempt

(o) If. i. 2, 3, 4.

of every thing sacred do we perceive amongst the *great*! What profanation of the Sabbath, what neglect of divine worship; what ignorance of religion and the Scriptures; what scoffing at the word of God and at all vital godliness, are practised by our superiors, whose baneful influence extend to the *middle* and the lowest classes of people! What dissipation and gaming! What luxury, drunkenness, and rioting! What chambering, and wantonness, what fornication, adultery, and divorces! What profane cursing, swearing, and perjury do we hear of among all orders! What a frequenting of plays, operas, and masquerades! And, whilst our taxes are perpetual subjects of complaint and discontent, how do we hear of immense sums of money lavishly squandered, and constantly expended, in building, and supporting those dreadful places of public amusements, those seminaries of vice, those pests of the nation! Where are the *magistrates* that are “a terror to evil works, and bear not the sword in vain;” that conscientiously enforce the due observance of the Lord’s day, or put the laws in force against immorality, without respect of person? Is there no cause

of

of complaint, in this great city, of shops being open, or only half shut ; of alehouses being frequented by the lower people, as well as taverns by the great ; of waggons coming into and going out of town, and even loading openly in our streets, on the Lord's day ? Is there no cause for the general observation, that we have the best laws, but the worst executed in the world ? Where are the *clergy* that are laborious and indefatigable in their duty, " that cry aloud and spare not, and lift up their voice like a trumpet, and shew the people their transgression (p) ?" Or that " determine to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified (q) ?" Where are the ministers that " shun not to declare the whole counsel of God, whether men will hear, or forbear ?" That maintain the Scripture-doctrines of original sin, the apostacy of human nature, and the helpless and irrecoverable state of fallen lost man, but by the sovereign grace, and almighty power of God in Christ ? Where are the ministers, that, in opposition to the poisonous and fatal errors of the Arian and Socinian heresies, insist on

(p) If. lviii. 1.

(q) 1 Cor. ii. 2.

the divine nature and dignity of the God-man, Christ Jesus ; the nature, necessity, and perfection of his obedience, the efficacy of his atonement, the imputation of his righteousness, and the fulness of his finished salvation ? Where are the ministers that insist upon the personality, the godhead, and the offices and operations of the Holy Ghost ; as convincing of sin, and of the righteousness of Christ ; converting sinners to God ; sanctifying the whole man, in soul, body, and spirit ; comforting believers under trials ; witnessing with their spirits they are children of God ; vouchsafed unto them as an earnest of their future inheritance ; and sealing them to the day of redemption ? Where are they that state the nature, and insist on the necessity (not of bare morality, and outward reformation), but of personal holiness and spiritual-mindedness, “ without which no man shall see the Lord ;” and of those “ fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God ? ” God be praised, there are *some*, but not *all*. Nay are there not many that prejudice their hearers against the leading doctrines, and the faithful ministers of the Gospel ? Or that set an example of frequenting places of pleasure

pleasure and dissipation, horse races, card tables, the assembly, and the playhouse? Where are they that feed the sheep and the lambs, and do not rather “ feed themselves, “ eat the fat, and clothe them with the “ wool; do they strengthen the diseased, “ heal the sick, bind up that which was “ broken, bring again that which was driven “ away, seek that which is lost, and not rule “ them with force and with cruelty; do “ they not suffer the sheep to wander upon “ the mountain, and to be scattered on all “ the face of the earth, and none to search or “ seek after them ?” The Lord complained of such negligent shepherds in Ezekiel’s time, ch. xxxiv. v. 2-6. Is there less cause of complaint now? Where are they that are “ instant “ in season and out of season (r) ?” That are “ examples of believers in word, in conversa- “ tion, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in “ prayer ? That give attendance to reading, “ to exhortation, to doctrine (f).” Are not “ the blind leading the blind, and both falling “ into the ditch ?” Do our *learned* men, instead of “ spoiling others through philosophy and

(r) 2 Tim. iv. 2.

(f) 1 Tim. iv.

“ vain deceit, after the tradition of men,
 “ after the rudiments of the world, and not
 “ after Christ (s);” make deep researches
 into the Scriptures, and acquaint themselves
 with the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven?
 Do they seek “ the wisdom that cometh down
 “ from above,” or are they not “vain in their
 “ imaginations (or reasonings) and their foolish
 “ hearts darkened; professing themselves wise,
 “ are they not become fools (t)?” Are not
 our *rich* men “ high-minded and trusting in
 “ uncertain riches (u),” that “ make them-
 “ selves wings and fly away;” instead of laying
 “ up treasures in heaven,” or of partaking of
 “ the unsearchable riches of Christ,” whilst
 they are here upon earth? Do they feed the
 hungry and cloath the naked, instead of
 “ cloathing themselves in purple and fine
 “ linen, and faring sumptuously every
 “ day (v)?” Do *parents* “ train up their
 “ children in the way wherein they should
 “ go,” “ in the nurture and admonition of
 “ the Lord (w),” or are they not utterly
 negligent of their immortal souls? and are
 not the *children*, of course, giving into the

(s) Col. ii. 8.

(v) Luke xvi. 19.

(t) Rom. i. 21, 22.

(w) Prov. xxii. 6.

(u) 1 Tim. vi. 16. Prov. xiii. 5.

follies and dissipation of youth, “ lovers of
“ pleasures more than lovers of God (x);”
and too often, after a life of profuseness and de-
bauchery, finish their career with bankruptcy,
beggary, and a prison; or with loathsome
disease, suicide, or an ignominious death at the
gallows? and are not the *poorest mechanics*,
or labouring people, spending that money
in an alehouse, which should maintain their
families, or pay their debts? and whilst they
are finding fault with their rulers, and under-
taking to mend the affairs of the nation, are
they not ruining themselves, and starving
their families?

Thus we see, “ the foundations are all
“ out of course (y);” and from “ the crown
“ of the head to the sole of the foot, there
“ is no soundness; but wounds, and bruises,
“ and putrifying sores.” Can we wonder,
if “ our country should become desolate, and
“ our cities burnt with fire; if strangers
“ should devour our land in our presence (z)?”
Can we wonder, if the Lord says, “ shall I
“ not visit for these things, and shall not
“ my soul be avenged on such a nation as

(x) 2 Tim. iii. 4.

(z) If. i. 6, 7.

(y) Ps. lxxxiii. 5.

“ this (a) ?” The Jews had been an highly favoured people, but they provoked the Lord with their ingratitude and rebellion, their infidelity, idolatry, and apostacy. They had been long threatened, and often and severely punished. They had been carried into captivity ; their city and their temple were in due time reduced to ruins ; and a general massacre took place, when tens of thousands were put to the sword. They had rejected God ; and God has rejected them ; and has made them, to this very day (of which ye are all eye witnesses) standing monuments, as a people, of his righteous displeasure, and vindictive justice. For though he bears long, and forbears, he will punish at last ; if “ his long-suffering leadeth not to repentance (b).” What is become of the seven churches of Asia ? Has not the Gospel-candlestick been long removed from them, according to the divine threatening (c), because they were fallen, and repented not ?

And what have *we* to expect, as a church and nation, but to be given over as a prey to our enemies teeth ? Verily “ except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small

(a) Jer. v. 9. (b) Rom. ii. 4. (c) Rev. ii. 5.

“ remnant,

“ remnant, we should have been as Sodom,
 “ and we should have been like unto Go-
 “ morrah (d).” What have *we* to expect, if
 God should let loose our ravenous foes upon
 us; and the French, the inveterate enemies
 of the English, their constitution, and mo-
 narchy, should prevail? Our king butchered,
 our government destroyed, and our places of
 worship turned into heathen temples! The
 Christian’s God blasphemed; and the ficti-
 tious *goddess*, Reason, adored in his room!
 Our Altars thrown down; our worship
 counted fanaticism; and our ministers slain
 with the sword! The houses of God turned
 into dens of thieves, and synagogues of Satan!
 Our prayers, and hymns of praise, giving
 way to *Ca Ira*, and bacchanalian songs; and
 the Lord’s Supper yielding to *civic fetes*!
 Our churches and meetings made the resi-
 dence of Dagon, instead of the ark of the
 Lord! and whilst some few are found, pray-
 ing to the God of Israel; the generality be-
 coming infidels, and saying, “ There is no
 God;” or crying, “ O Baal hear us;” or,
 “ great is the Diana of the Ephesians.”
 Your boasted liberty would be succeeded by
 imprisonment, and confiscation of property;

(d) If. i. 9.

C 4

your

your government by anarchy ; your peace and order by discord and confusion ; your parliaments of king, lords, and commons, by *conventions* of the lowest and vilest of the people ; your trials by jury must yield to mock judicatures ; where you will be *denounced* without grounds ; tried without law ; and condemned without mercy ; where your accusers will be your judges ; where an insatiable thirst for blood and treasure can only be gratified by the death of the unhappy and devoted victims of their rage ; and where the last and only favour you can expect is a speedy execution ; and an end put to your earthly misery, by being barbarously drowned from *a scuttled boat* ; or shot to death by the military ; or your heads, by dozens, chopped off by the *guillotine*, that new-fashioned instrument of despotic tyranny, and wanton and cruel massacre.

Is this the boasted *liberty* of the French ? Is it *this*, that any are so infatuated as to wish to exchange for the privileges of a Briton ? Is the blasphemy, infidelity, and atheism we read and hear of, more to be desired than the religion of Christ and the Gospel ? Is “ the blood under the altar” of those confessors

fessors and martyrs, “ that were slain for the “ word of God, and for the testimony which “ they held,” to be treated with contempt ? whilst the ashes of the vilest infidel, and most barefaced atheist, whose writings have poisoned thousands (I mean, *Voltaire*), shall be solemnly consecrated with immortal honour ; and the wretch, who is lifting up his eyes in *torments*, be blasphemously *deified* here upon *earth* ; and this, with the most marked and impious defiance and affront of the Majesty of heaven and earth ?

Awake, Britons, awake ! Dread the consequences of this contagious infection. Not a moment is to be lost. It is not my province, nor desire, to rouse you to *arms* ; but it is the duty of every minister of Christ, to excite you to take a more successful weapon in hand, than all carnal weapons put together, I mean *prayer*. Let me address each of you, as the ship-master did Jonah, “ what meanest thou, “ O sleeper, arise, call upon thy God, if so “ be that God will think upon us, that we “ perish not (e).” If the Lord of hosts be “ with us, and the God of Jacob be our “ refuge,” we need not fear. “ It is better to

(e) Jonah i. 6.

“ trust

“ trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes (f).” Whilst others *fight*, let us *pray*. Whilst “they put their trust in chariots and horses, we will remember the name of the Lord our God (g).” In vain do we look to our admirals and generals, our fleets and our armies, yea and all the combined armies of Europe, if God be against us; if the Lord himself “ fight not our battles, “ vain is the help of man (h).” We then “ only trust on the staff of a bruised reed, on “ which if a man lean, it will go into his “ hand and pierce it (i).” Let us therefore,

III. Point out the means of averting God’s displeasure, and obtaining his mercy and favour in time of danger.

(1). Be humbled for sin, original and actual. “ From whence come wars and fightings “ among us? Come they not hence, even of “ our lusts, that war in our members (k)?” Had there been no sin, there would be no war. This is one of the many sore judg-

(f) Ps. cxviii. 8, 9.

(i) 2 Chron. xviii. 21

(g) Ps. xx. 7.

(k) James iv. 1.

(h) Ps. lx. 11.

ments inflicted on a world, “ that lieth in wickedness (*l*) ;” by reason of sin. “ Conceived as we are in sin, and born in iniquity, we go astray from our mother’s womb (*m*) ;” and “ the imaginations of the thoughts of our hearts are only evil continually (*n*).” “ The whole world is guilty before God (*o*) ;” for “ there is no man that liveth and sinneth not (*p*).” Hence the strife between God and man. “ Sin is the transgression of the law of God (*q*).” This is “ the abominable thing I hate (*r*),” saith the Lord. The carnal mind is enmity against God (*s*).” We have already mentioned some of the many crying sins, national and private, flowing from the corrupt fountain of “ a deceitful and desperately wicked heart (*t*) ;” from whence proceed “ all evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies (*u*).” These are the things that fight against us with more success than all other enemies. But is there

(*l*) 1 John v. 19.

(*q*) 1 John iii. 4.

(*m*) Ps. li. 5. lviii. 3.

(*o*) Jer. xliv. 4.

(*n*) Gen. vi. 5

(*s*) Rom. viii. 7.

(*o*) Rom. iii. 19.

(*t*) Jer. xvii. 9.

(*p*) 1 Kin. viii. 46.

(*u*) Mat. xv. 19.

no pardon, no reconciliation, no mercy ? Yes, blessed be God ! There is a proclamation from heaven, declaring “ the Lord, the “ Lord God merciful and gracious, long- “ suffering, and abundant in goodness and “ truth, keeping mercy for thousands, for- “ giving iniquity, transgression, and sin (v). ” Therefore,

(2). Sue for mercy, in that one, yet sure, way, in which it can be found. Go, as sinners, to God in Christ. Lay down your arms ; cry for mercy. But remember, it is in *him* only God can pardon, consistently with his purity, his declarations in his word, and his justice. He is “ of purer eyes than to “ behold iniquity (w) ; ” and can “ by no means spare the guilty (x). ” He is a sin-avenging God, and jealous of his own honour and government ; he has declared the awful sanction of his holy law, “ The wages of sin is “ death ; the soul that sinneth shall die (y). ” Yet, hear O heavens, and give ear O earth ! when “ Israel had destroyed himself (z), ” and was as hopeless as helpless ; when all human

(v) Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. (y) Rom. vi. 23. Ezek. xviii. 4.

(w) Heb. i. 13. (z) Hos. xiii. 9.

(x) Exod. xxxiv. 7.

wisdom and power failed, to p'an or execute a method of reconciliation ; when " God " looked and there was none to keep ; and " he wondered and there was none to uphold, " his own arm brought salvation (a)." Infinite wisdom concerted, and almighty power accomplished, the glorious mystery of redeeming love. " God was manifest in the flesh (b)." " When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, even from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them (c)." " God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (d)." " Now life and immortality were brought to light in the Gospel (e)." Now " God could be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus (f)." Now " mercy and truth met together ; righteousness and peace kissed each other (g)." Christ is our peace ; he hath made peace by the

(a) If. lxiij. 5.

(e) 2 Tim. i. 10.

(b) Tim. iii. 16.

(f) Rom. iii. 26.

(c) Gal. iv. 4, 5. & iii 13.

(g) Ps. lxxxv, 10.

(d) 2 Cor. v. 19.

blood of his cross (*b*) ; he proclaims it in his word ; he applies it by his spirit. It is to be had for asking ; without any merit of our's, " without any works of righteousness (*i*)," to be performed by us, to obtain it. The glory of the grace, and of the blessings of the Gospel of peace, is, that they are bestowed freely and fully, " without money and without price (*k*)."
 In him there is redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace ; yea, plenteous redemption to deliver Israel from all their offences (*l*)."
 His blood cleanseth from all sin (*m*)."
 Wash ye, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before his eyes ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool (*n*)."
 In his pierced side is " a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness (*o*)" " Wash then and be clean." " Look unto him, and be saved (*p*)."
 In him is salvation, present

(*b*) Eph. ii. 14. Col. i 20. (*m*) 1 John i. 7.

(*i*) Tit. iii. 5. (*n*) If. i. 16, 18.

(*k*) If. lv. 1. (*o*) Zech. xiii. 1.

(*l*) Eph. i. 7. Ps. cxxx. 7. (*p*) If. xlvi. 22.

" and

“ and everlasting. But “ there is none in
 “ any other ; for there is no other name
 “ under heaven among men whereby we can
 “ be saved (q).” It is “ by faith alone in
 “ him we can be justified, and have peace
 “ with God (r);” “ justified, I say, from all
 “ things, from which we could not be justi-
 “ fied by the law of Moses (s).” The law
 declares, “ whosoever offendeth in one point,
 “ is guilty of all (t).” The law pronounces
 death on every offender ; “ cursed is every
 “ one that continueth not in all the things
 “ which are written in the book of the law
 “ to do them (t).” The law provides no
 “ help for the fallen, no remedy, no pardon
 “ for the guilty. But “ what the law could
 “ not do, in that it was weak through the
 “ flesh, God sending his own son in the like-
 “ ness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned
 “ sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of
 “ the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk
 “ not after the flesh but after the spirit.”

Hence :

(3). Seek a divine change to be wrought in

(q) Acts iv. 12.

(s) James ii. 10.

(r) Rom. v. 1

(t) Gal. iii. 10.

(f) Acts xiii. 39.

your hearts, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. For “ if any man be in Christ, he “ is a new creature. Old things pass away, “ all things become new (u).” Make not Christ “ the minister of sin (x).” “ Turn not “ the grace of God into lasciviousness (y).” “ Shall we continue in sin that grace may “ abound ? God forbid (z) !” Remember, “ if any man have not the spirit of Christ, “ he is none of his (a).” “ ye must be “ born again of the spirit, or ye can never “ enter the kingdom of God (b).” “ They “ only who are led by the spirit of God, are “ the sons of God (c).” And “ the fruit of “ the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, “ gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, tem- “ perance.” For they “ that are Christ’s “ have crucified the flesh with its affections “ and lusts. If we live in the spirit, let us “ also walk in the spirit (d).” Therefore :

(4). See that ye, who profess, “ adorn also “ the doctrine of God our Saviour in all

(u) Rom. viii. 3, 4.

(z) Rom. vi. 1.

(v) 2 Cor. v. 17.

(a) Rom. viii. 9.

(w) Math. i. 21.

(b) John iii. 5.

(x) Gal. ii. 17.

(c) Rom. viii. 14.

(y) Jude iv.

(d) Gal. v. 22, 25.

“ things

“ things (e).” “ Put to silence the ignorance
 “ of foolish men by well-doing (f).” Let
 not your conduct be evil spoken of. “ Give
 “ none offence to the Jews, nor to the Gen-
 “ tiles, nor to the church of God (g).” Rather
 “ shew forth the praises of him who hath
 “ called you out of darkness into his mar-
 “ vellous light (h);” that “ as he who hath
 “ called you is holy, be ye also holy in all
 “ manner of conversation (i).” “ Ye are
 “ bought with a price, therefore glorify
 “ God your Saviour with your spirit and your
 “ body, which are his (k).” Let the seal of
 “ God be seen in your foreheads (l).” Let the
 image and superscription of Christ be visible
 on your whole outward man; it will be so,
 if the inward man is “ all glorious within.”
 Yea let all men “ take knowledge of you
 “ that you have been with Jesus (m);” and
 be constrained to acknowledge, that “ we do
 * not make void the law through faith, God
 “ forbid, yea that we establish the law (n).”

(e) Tit. ii. 10.

(k) 1 Cor. vi. 20.

(f) 1 Pet. ii. 15.

(l) Rev. ix. 4.

(g) 1. Cor. x. 32.

(m) Acts iv. 13.

(h) 1 Pet. ii. 9.

(n) Rom. iii. 31

(i) 1 Pet. i. 15.

D

Thus

Thus shall we prove to all, that we are no enemies to good works ; yea we maintain that they can proceed from no other principle, but “ the love of Christ constraining us (o) ;” and that where “ the grace of God comes to “ the heart, bringing salvation,” it teaches us what nothing else can effectually teach us, “ that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, “ we should live soberly, righteously, and “ godly in this present world (p).” Add to this,

(4). not to forget the great duty of *prayer*. We are exhorted, by divine command, “ that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks “ be made for all men ; for kings, and for all “ that are in authority, that we may lead a “ quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and “ honesty ; for this is good and acceptable “ in the sight of God our Saviour (q).” “ The “ effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man “ availeth much. Elias was a man subject “ to like passions as we are, and he prayed “ earnestly that it might not rain, and it “ rained not on the earth by the space of

(o) 2 Cor. v. 14. (p) Tit. ii. 11, 12. (q) 1 Tim. ii. 1. 3.

“ three years and six months. And he
 “ prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and
 “ the earth brought forth her fruit (r).” If
 there had been but *ten righteous* men found
 in Sodom, the Lord would have spared it for
ten’s sake (s). Whilst Daniel was praying
 to the Lord to turn away his anger from
 Jerusalem; “ for their sins and iniquities were
 “ become a reproach to all about them; ”
 whilst he was praying and confessing the sins
 of his people (s), he had a special messenger
 sent to him from the Lord with a gracious
 answer, and the best tidings that could ever
 be announced to a sinful world.

And has not the Lord poured out a spirit
 of supplication on his people in this kingdom
 ere now, and heard and answered their prayers?
 Has he not raised up one and another that
 “ stood in the gap before him for the land,
 “ that he should not destroy it, or pour out his
 “ indignation upon it, and consume them
 “ with the fire of his wrath (t)?” Have they
 not, like Jacob, wrestled with God, and pre-
 vailed (u)?” Was there ever a more remarka-
 ble and general spirit of prayer poured out

(r) James v. 16, 18.

(t) Ezek. xxii. 30. 31.

(s) Gen. xviii. 32.

(u) Gen. xxxii. 24, 28.

(s) Dan. ix. 16, 20.

than in that national calamity, the late universally lamented illness of our beloved sovereign? Was ever prayer more evidently heard, more seasonably and effectually answered, to the joy of every loyal subject, and to the confusion and disappointment of the enemies of our king and country? The Lord has appeared for us wonderfully in times past. He is still the same. “ He is our “ present help in time of trouble (*v*).” And “ who knows if he will return and leave a “ blessing behind him (*w*),” and deliver us from our enemies “ whose wrath is kindled “ against us, when they are so ready to swal- “ low us (*x*) ?” Then shall all be constrained to say, “ Happy art thou, O Britain ! Who “ is like unto thee, O people saved by the “ Lord, the shield of thy help, and the sword “ of thy excellency. Thine enemies shall be “ found liars unto thee ; and thou shalt tread “ upon their high places (*y*).”

Let each of us then apart “ enter into our “ chambers (*z*),” intreat the face of the Lord our God, and pray for the people, that pray not for themselves ; not forgetting even

(*v*) Ps. xlvi. 1.

(*y*) Deut. xxxiii. 29.

(*w*) Joel ii. 14.

(*z*) Is. xxvi. 20.

(*x*) Ps. cxxiv. 3.

our enemies, and whatever may be the issue of the present dark dispensation of his providence "hide ourselves, as it were, for a little "moment till the indignation be overpast." Blessed be God, "that man Christ Jesu is "an hiding place from the wind, and a covert "from the tempest (a)." He sets a mark upon the foreheads "of the men that sigh, "and that cry for all the abominations that "are done in the midst of the land (b)." Pray also earnestly, that the Gospel, notwithstanding our sins and provocations are so many, may be continued to us and our posterity; that it may be preached in its purity, and be "the power of God unto salvation (c)" to thousands and tens of thousands; that we may "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints (d); and that a speedy end may be put to "the damnable heresies "that deny the Lord that hath bought "us (e)." Pray likewise, that the Lord may preserve our invaluable constitution to us and our posterity; may protect the person of our beloved sovereign from all secret conspiracy and open violence, and that he would prosper his government. To this end, that

(a) If. xxxii. 2.

(d) Jude iii.

(b) Ezek. ix. 4.

(e) 2 Pet. ii. 1.

(c) Rom. i. 16.

he would counsel our counsellors, and “ teach “ our senators wisdom (*f*).” And at this time especially, that he would graciously open the eyes, turn the hearts, and pardon the sins of our enemies; prevent more bloodshed; restore peace; and “ beat our swords into “ plough shares, and our spears into pruning “ hooks (*g*);” and “ that the kingdoms of the “ world may become the kingdoms of the “ Lord and of his Christ (*h*).” Thus shall ye prove yourselves good patriots, faithful subjects, and real Christians. This will be making the best use of a solemn fast; this will not be merely afflicting the soul for a day; this will not be trifling with the most High-God. “ Rend your heart “ therefore, and not your garments, and turn “ unto the Lord your God;” “ and you will “ find him gracious and merciful, slow to “ anger and of great kindness, and repenting “ him of the evil (*i*).” But seeing “ without “ Christ we can do nothing (*k*);” and yet “ through him that strengtheneth us we can “ do all things (*l*),” turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope, even “ to day do

(*f*) Ps. cv. 22.

(*i*) Joel ii. 13.

(*g*) If. ii. 4.

(*k*) John xv. 5.

(*h*) Rev. xi. 15.

“ I declare, saith the Lord, that I will render
 “ double unto thee. The Lord your God
 “ shall save you in that day as the flock of his
 “ people, and ye shall be as the stones of a
 “ crown, and be lifted up as an ensign upon
 “ his land (*m*).” Therefore whilst we have
 cause to lament with the church of old,
 “ The crown is fallen from our head, woe
 “ unto us that we have sinned; wherefore
 “ dost thou forget us for ever, and forsake us
 “ so long time ?” yet let us be encouraged to
 add the words that follow, “ turn thou us
 “ unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned,
 “ renew our days as of old (*n*).” And may
 “ the Lord hear us in this our day of trouble,
 “ the name of the God of Jacob defend us !
 “ Send us help from the sanctuary, and
 “ strengthen us out of Zion, grant us to set
 “ up our banners in his name, and vouchsafe
 “ us the saving strength of his right hand.
 “ Then shall our enemies be brought down
 “ and fallen, but we shall rise and stand up-
 “ right. Therefore, save, Lord, let the king
 “ hear us when we call (*o*) !”

(*l*) Phil. iv. 13.

(*n*) Lam. v. 16, 20, 21, 22.

(*m*) Zech. ix. 12, 16.

(*o*) Ps. xx. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9.

THE END.

(12)

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